



Talbot County Planning Commission Decision Summary

Wednesday, December 04, 2019 at 9:00 a.m.

Bradley Meeting Room

11 N. Washington Street, Easton, Maryland

Attendance:

Commission Members:

Phillip “Chip” Councell, Vice Chairman
William Boicourt
Michael Strannahan
Lisa Ghezzi

Staff:

Mary Kay Verdery, Planning Officer
Miguel Salinas, Assistant Planning Officer
Greg Allis, Zoning & Planning Coordinator
Elisa Deflaux, Environmental Planner
Martin Sokolich, Long Range Planner

- 1. Call to Order**—Commissioner Councell called the meeting to order at 9:02 a.m. He started with asking the new members of Talbot County to introduce themselves. New staff included:

Jennifer Collins, Planning Staff Assistant
Greg Allis, Zoning & Floodplain Coordinator

Both employees made brief introductions and expressed that they were excited to be joining Talbot County.

Commissioner Councell explained there were only four (4) members of the Commission present and that a tie vote is considered a negative vote. He stated that any applicant may choose to withdraw their application until the next month without penalty.

- 2. Decision Summary Review**— November 6, 2019—The Commission noted the following corrections to the draft decision summary:
 - Line 171 & 177; capitalize Chesapeake Bay.
 - Line 217; note that Mr. Kennedy is the Chairman of The Bay 100 Coalition.
 - Line 217; insert at the end of the paragraph; “in his presentation he indicated that he received no adverse comment on the project from the public.”

Commissioner Ghezzi expressed the importance of the minutes as a public record. She asks that we do include the major points made by the commissioners and the public. Commissioners and Planning and Zoning Staff discussed this issue and confirmed the goal for Decision Summary is to capture the main points of the meeting. For additional detail, the minutes are recorded and available online and can be transcribed for a fee. The Planning and Zoning will rely on the feedback from the Commissioners to obtain the proper balance of details listed on the Decision Summary.

Commissioner Boicourt moved to approve the November 6, 2019 Decision Summary, with amendments. Commissioner Strannahan seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

3. Old Business—None.

4. New Business

Applicant: Nagel Farm Service II, LLC
File No.: SP615
Agent: Chris Waters, Davis, Bowen & Friedel, Inc.
Request: Major Site Plan—Phase II, one 90-foot grain storage tank and expansion of the temporary grain storage area
Location: 14209 Old Wye Mills Road, Wye Mills, MD 21679
Zoning: Map 1, Grid 10, Parcel 7; Zone: VH

Elisa Deflaux stated that Chip Nagel requests a postponement. He would like to be placed on the agenda for the Planning Commission meeting on January 02, 2020. Mary Kay Verdery would like it noted that there were only four commissioners in attendance today, December 4, 2019; one of Mr. Nagel's reasons for postponement.

Commissioner Strannahan motioned to move consideration of the Nagel Farm Service application to the January 2, 2020 meeting. Commissioner Ghezzi seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

Applicant: Talbot County, Maryland
Agent: Martin Sokolich, Senior Planner
Request: Recommendation to Talbot County Council—MALPF Program Recertification Report

Martin Sokolich is requesting that the commissioners forward the application for recertification to the Talbot County Council with a favorable recommendation. Martin Sokolich started his presentation on the MALPF program. MALPF stands for the Maryland Office of Planning's Maryland Agricultural Land Preservation Program. MALPF is a state run and funded program to preserve farm land; funds come from state funds and transfer taxes. The program started approximately ten years ago. Talbot County, in conjunction with the state, has established a Priority Preservation Area in order to concentrate land preservation efforts in the most desirable County locations based on a number of factors. The MALPF is one of the major sources the County has to preserve farm land.

Martin stated the County would like to maintain its status with the MALPF program. Previously, the MALPF required recertification every two years. Due to state legislation, the recertification, if approved, is good five years. The recertification report that was provided to all of the Commissioners is a summary of County activity from July 1, 2017

98 to June 30, 2019. The tables in the report provide information such as amount and source
99 of funds, fund expenditures, and the amount of funds retained. The maps in the report
100 indicate land that has been permanently preserved through the program.

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102 The Commission asked how farms were ranked in the MALPF process. Martin responded
103 that the MALPF program is looking for statistical information on each farm application
104 such as: number of acres, how much prime agricultural soil, how much land do they want
105 to preserve, do they want to reserve lots for their children, and is the property in the
106 critical area. Each county has their own process for ranking the applications. Talbot
107 County has added bonus points for “best management practices”. The top ranking farms
108 for Talbot County are usually one, two, three or four points apart. The state makes offers
109 to the top-ranked applications and they work their way down the list until they run out of
110 money.

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112 The Commission provided a number of comments and concerns. Commissioner Councell
113 commented that approximately ten years ago a survey was done by the Talbot County
114 Farm Bureau. The results showed that 70% of farmers wanted to get into a land
115 preservation program. In the MALPF process, there is a certain amount of money and the
116 farms get ranked. Once the money is used, other farms can get an offer at a discounted
117 rate. The process can be discouraging and competitive, but it may be the only land
118 preservation option for some farmers. Commissioner Councell also mentioned that Queen
119 Anne’s County gives preference in the ranking system to resident landowners versus
120 nonresidents. He also expressed concern and support for young farmers in Talbot County
121 as they are more likely to farm the land and not develop it with additional housing. He
122 would like a process to give young farmers an advantage.

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124 Commissioner Ghezzi wanted to know if there was any way to increase the funding for
125 preservation as maintaining the rural nature of Talbot County is a priority of the
126 comprehensive plan. In response, Commissioner Councell explained that funding comes
127 from transfer taxes and more development equals more funding. Martin Sokolich
128 explained that different counties have their own programs. Montgomery County divided
129 the county to include an agricultural reserve area where development is limited. Martin
130 stated that putting in a local share is the most common way to increase funds. For
131 example, Queen Anne’s County has put \$300,000.00 out of their budget into their
132 program. He discussed more programs that have been developed by others.

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134 Commissioner Boicourt volunteered Commissioner Councell to write a letter to the
135 County Council stating the need to increase the MALPF funding and consider ideas like
136 Commissioner Councell’s young farmer program.

There were suggested changes to the recertification report by the Commission. Commissioner Councell suggested including a footnote to Table 9 that states the 20,000 acres cannot be explained. Commissioner Boicourt suggested a review of Table 1 and 9 to see if they are duplicates. Commissioner Ghezzi suggested that staff fix the format of denominations on the report as they are unclear. Mary Kay Verdery stated that staff will review all tables for discrepancies.

Commissioner Strannahan recommended the acceptance of the recertification application with the changes suggested. Commissioner Boicourt seconded the motion. The motion carried unanimously.

5. Discussions Item

Miguel Salinas spoke about the recent Cordova meeting. Approximately sixty people attended the second public meeting. Consultants presented their preliminary draft report. Some of the discussions at the meeting are stated below:

- Residents expressed that the recycling collection center is unsightly and they would like it moved to another location if possible. The preliminary draft report suggested to screen the center.
- A recommendation was made for a safer pedestrian crossing.
- There was some discussion on the fact that there is not public sewer system in the village. Due to zoning requirements on the minimum lot size to accommodate a septic system, any new development would have to be more suburban style.
- Chris Hlubb, the owner of the proposed salmon farm, presented some information about his project and attendees were able to ask him questions.
- Rails-to-Trials was mentioned but there was not a lot of discussion on the topic.

Miguel noted the Consultants will be presenting a Final Draft at the Work Session on January 14, 2019. Commissioner Councell noted he is in favor of the Rails-to-Trials. However, he understands there is concern over conflicts with commercial trucks and safety. He stated he is not in favor of Rails-to-Trials over farm land due to liability.

6. Staff Matters—None.

7. Work Sessions

Mary Kay Verdery Reminder noted that one Tuesday, January 14, 2020, there will be a Planning Commission Joint Work Session with the County Council, 3:00 p.m., at the County Courthouse to include an overview of the draft Cordova Village Master Plan and an overview of the draft Working Waterfront Overlay District.

Mary Kay Verdery added that on December 18, 2019 at 5:00 p.m., there will be a joint work session with the Short-Term Rental Review Board and County Council. The session will be held at the Community Center. The County Council will be reviewing comments that were received from the public and the recommendations of the Board.

Mary Kay Verdery also added that on December 18, 2019 from 3-5:00 p.m., Permits and Inspection is hosting a Builder Trade and Design public meeting. Staff will be discussing

the 2018 building code. Talbot County is still using the 2003 building code. The state has adopted the 2018 building code.

8. Commission Matters—None.

9. Adjournment— Commissioner Councell adjourned the meeting at 10:15 a.m.

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